

RP 5

Guilt and Shame



Guilt is feeling bad about what you've done: "I am sorry I spent so much time using drugs and not paying attention to my family."

What are some things you have done in the past that you feel guilty about?

Feeling guilty can be a healthy reaction. It often means you have done something that doesn't agree with your values and morals. It is not unusual for people to do things they feel guilty about. You can't change the past. It is important to make peace with yourself. Sometimes that means making amends for things you've said and done.

Remember the following:

- It's all right to make mistakes.
- It's all right to say, "I don't know," "I don't care," or "I don't understand."
- You don't have to explain yourself to anyone if you're acting responsibly.

Do you still feel guilty about the things you listed? What can you do to improve the situation?

Shame is feeling bad about who you are: "I am hopeless and worthless."

Do you feel ashamed of being dependent on substances? Yes ____ No ____

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Do you feel you are weak because you couldn't or can't stop using?

Yes ____ No ____

Do you feel you are stupid because of what you have done?

Yes ____ No ____

Do you feel that you are a bad person because you are involved with substance use? Yes ____ No ____

Recovery is always a hard process. No one knows why some people can stop using substances once they enter treatment and decide to be abstinent and other people struggle to maintain abstinence. Research shows that family histories, genes, and individual physical differences in people play a role. Being dependent on drugs or alcohol does not mean you are bad, stupid, or weak.

What we do know is that you cannot recover by

- Trying to use willpower
- Trying to be good
- Trying to be strong

Two things to make recovery work are

- Being smart
- Working hard

Everyone who is successful at recovery will tell you, "It was the hardest thing I ever did." No one can do it *for* you, and it will not happen *to* you.

